



Pic courtesy Broome Historical Society.

Remembering the Air Raid on Broome after 75 years

On the morning of 3 March 1942, nine Japanese Zero fighters and a reconnaissance plane swooped down over Broome, killing an estimated 88 people and destroying 22 Australian, Dutch and US aircraft.

The WWII Air Raid on Broome is the second-greatest wartime loss of life on Australian soil, and 2017 marks its 75th Anniversary.

This tragic event also included amazing tales of survival and bravery, including the shooting down from the ground of a Zero by Dutch pilot Lt Gus Winckel.

The remote community of Beagle Bay rescued the crew and passengers of a Dutch DC3 that was shot down and crash landed at Carnot Bay. The passengers would surely have perished in the unforgiving environment if the Beagle Bay community had not come to their aid.

Now 75 years later, a solemn memorial service at 8am on Friday 3 March 2017 will mark this important chapter in Australia's WWII history.

The Shire of Broome has worked with the RSL Broome Sub-Branch, Norforce, St Mary's College, Broome Historical Society and others in the community to prepare the commemoration that will be held in Bedford Memorial Park, overlooking Roebuck Bay where the attack took place and where the wreckage of Catalina flying boats still remain on the seabed to this day.



The memorial service will include a moving reflective performance by St Mary's College and conclude with a flypast provided by the RAAF No. 79 Squadron.

Those visiting Broome for the occasion include descendants of both victims and survivors of the tragic events of 1942, along with representatives of the Dutch, US, Japanese and Indian Governments.

Other events planned to commemorate the anniversary will be hosted by the Broome Civic Centre, Broome RSL Sub-Branch and Broome Historical Society Museum.

Broome Shire President, Ron Johnston, says he encourages the people of Broome to make sure they attend the memorial service.

"The Air Raid of 1942 marks a major chapter in the history of both our town and our nation, and the Shire of Broome is proud to join with others in the community to keep this memory alive," Cr Johnston says.

RSLWA Chief Executive Officer, John McCourt, says the significance of commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the raid cannot be underestimated.

"To pay homage to those who perished, to honour those who defended Broome and to never forget the horrors of war is most important," Mr McCourt says.



Events Program - Broome Air Raid 75th Anniversary

Thursday 2nd March

6am – 8am: Guided walking tour to Catalina Flying Boat wrecks in Roebuck Bay

Departs from lawn at Town Beach groyne at 6am sharp with Broome Historical Walking Tours. Free of charge, but RSVP required to simon.penn@broome.wa.gov.au

PLEASE NOTE: A reasonable level of fitness is required, with a walk of 1km each way over wet sand and mud at low tide. Wading shoes, hat, sunscreen, water bottle and insect repellent required.

2pm – 4.30pm: Reflections on the WWII Air Raid on Broome

Broome Civic Centre, Weld St. Free entry, all welcome:

- Author John Thompson-Gray presents *Broome's Great Diamond Theft 1942*
- Australian Sikh Heritage Association's Tarun Preet Singh presents *Flying Officer Manmohan Singh and Sikhs in Australian Military History*
- Screening of Tom Poederbach documentary film *Cramerus*, the story of military pilot Pieter Cramerus, the only living survivor of the Dutch DC3 shot down at Carnot Bay. Introduced by historian Dion Marinis.



RAAF No. 79 Squadron will provide a flypast to conclude the 75th Anniversary Memorial Service.

Friday 3rd March

8am sharp – 9.30am: Broome Air Raid 75th Anniversary Memorial Service

Bedford Memorial Park, cnr Hamersley and Weld St. Free entry, all welcome.

The Broome community is invited to join representatives of the Australian, WA, Dutch, US, Indian and Japanese governments, and descendants of those involved on 3 March 1942, at a solemn memorial service that will include a moving reflective performance by St Mary's College, and conclude with a flypast by RAAF No. 79 Squadron.

9.30am: Broome RSL Sub-Branch Post-Memorial Service Gathering

Cnr Robinson and Barker St. Free entry, all welcome.

4pm - 6pm: Broome Historical Society Museum

Robinson St. Free entry, all welcome.

Unveiling of Dutch military uniform of WWII Broome Air Raid survivor, Lt Simon Koens, donated by Koens family; light refreshments and museum open for viewing.

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